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# THE CORRELATION OF EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

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In 1916 the Meriden High School began an experiment in correlation between the department of business education and the various extra-curricular activities. As in most schools, the students had been allowed to manage their own activities under entirely separate organizations with a very loose and totally inadequate accounting either to the members of the respective organizations or to the school authorities. The student managers and leaders were left too much to their own devices, often with rather unsatisfactory results. Certainly the best kind of business training was not secured by the few who actually participated in the work offered under such conditions. It is doubtful if the experience gained was of much value beyond the possible development of initiative and a sense of responsibility.

Perhaps the most grievous fault of such a loose administration of school activities lies in the lack of equalized opportunity for training in democracy. A very few students profited at the most and these in something of a high-handed and autocratic manner. Small cliques dominated each organization to a considerable extent, and, unless there happened to be a zealous faculty supervisor, the management was usually open to suspicion and often to severe criticism.

It was apparent that the student leaders needed wise guidance in the management of their business relations and that a much larger number of students should receive the benefits of the opportunities for business training that such leadership affords. It is now very generally recognized among educators that the extra-curricular activities offer extensive and justifiable means for educative effort with the most promising results. The Meriden High

School faculty endorsed this viewpoint and set about organizing a plan that would attempt to make the most of such opportunities.

Here was the business department which could be made more effective by the use of material of a more practical and interesting nature. Here, too, were a number of school activities involving business relations and offering a multitude of real business problems. The question was raised: Why not have the business department develop the principles and appreciation of business relations in the management and conduct of the extra-curricular activities? The most difficult problem was to get the idea into a workable plan satisfactory and appealing to the various organizations and feasible to the business department.

Fortunately, the business department had a nucleus for the development of its part in the program of correlation. A small supply room had been under the direction of the department for some time, but only a small line of supplies for the use of the business students was handled. Some of the business students helped the director in the distribution of the supplies and in the stock-keeping. It was proposed that this supply room be developed into a school store under the supervision of the business department. Larger quarters were secured and equipped with counters, shelves, bookkeeping desk, manager's desk, typewriting desk, cash register, adding machine, and a number of other items of equipment necessary for the conduct of the business of an actual mercantile establishment in the most approved fashion.

The stock of supplies was increased to cover the needs of the entire school. This meant a considerable extension as the school is a comprehensive one offering a number of different curricula. Texts were furnished by the city; all remaining supplies were placed on sale in the school store. Several miscellaneous features were added, athletic goods being the most important. Other articles have been added from time to time as the interests and wants of the students warranted. The prices of all goods have been kept as near the actual cost as possible, and this policy has resulted in the saving of large sums to the students.

The general management of the school store was placed in the hands of the head of the business department, but the actual work

of the establishment was made a part of the training of the students of the business curriculum and of such other students as were from time to time worked into the plan.

A scheme was worked out whereby each member of the fourth-year class of the business curriculum should become at some time the manager of the store, having previously passed through the positions of stock clerk, sales clerk, cashier, and bookkeeper. With the rapid development of the volume of business, it became necessary to augment the force of clerks and assistants by extending the store experience to the members of the third-year class. The most important positions were reserved for the fourth-year class. From time to time it was found advisable to vary the length of the period which a student should serve at a given position. Some students required longer periods than others; and, in some cases, it seemed best to have certain students pass through the minor positions more than once before accepting the more responsible places.

The advantages of the real business relations of the store in the application of the principles laid down in the text are obvious. Here were concrete problems of bookkeeping, filing, stenography, management, salesmanship, and stock-keeping which increased interest and developed effectiveness on the part of the students in the department. From such applications came a spirit and influence that were reflected in the whole life of the school.

Once the store was thoroughly organized and successfully running, there came the opportunity for further correlation in other directions. The business department had really just begun to serve the school as well as itself, and soon the school realized the advantages of wise management and correct business relations in all of its activities. Applying business organization and methods to all of the school activities presented a difficult problem, considerably greater than the organization of the store which had been entirely within the business department. It became apparent that there must first be a central organization with which all of the clubs and various activities could be affiliated. A student council previously organized afforded a means of solution, and from it finally emerged a plan for a single all-inclusive general association of which all activities would become units or affiliated parts.

A board of control, composed of the faculty supervisors and student representatives, was vested with governing authority, subject to the approval of the principal; a student council was the particular representative body of the students. These two organizations became the definite agencies for carrying out the plans for centralization that would permit the correlation with the business department which was desired.

The first step was to centralize all of the financial activities of the school. A general treasurer was appointed from the faculty of the business department. A central treasury was formed into which all of the financial receipts of every organization in the school were to be placed. The general treasurer became responsible for all money deposited in the central treasury. An official auditor was also appointed from the faculty. Under the direction of the latter work student auditors who, because of the responsibility of dealing with real accounts, gain valuable experience and a realization of the importance of such work.

The central treasury soon precipitated the organization of a school bank where all of the accounts of the different organizations could be kept and where treasurers and managers could make deposits, draw cash, and present bills. Students who wished to draw cash or secure checks for bills to be paid on the accounts of the various organizations presented slips carrying the name of the organization, a designation of their official capacity, the reason for the disbursement, and the official authorization of the faculty supervisor.

In the gradual extension of the plan of correlation opportunity was given the classes in economics to make a special study of the organization and administration of banks and to learn the details of the banking business. Then came the possibility to elect from the economics classes a board of directors for the school bank and for the savings bank. These boards can meet upon call and discuss ways and means of increasing the facilities, influence, and efficiency of the school banks and the methods of transacting school business. The students are enabled in this way to realize the actual problems of money and banking, and a keen interest is created in the accumulation of information and the application of practical knowledge.

Obviously, such applications and treatment help to vitalize the work of the classroom.

The students of the business curriculum also became the clerks, bookkeepers, and cashiers of the bank and were given the experience of responsibility and training in the handling of large sums of real money. It was found that the experience gained in the store was of considerable advantage to the students and could be used as a basis for promotion to the work in the bank.

In co-operation with the Educational Thrift Service and a local savings bank, the department now conducts a school branch for savings. The savings bank is a separate organization from the school bank with a different office force and a special window in the Activity Office where deposits are received and all business relative to the savings bank is transacted. Ninety per cent of the students carry savings deposits, and from 50 to 70 per cent make deposits every week. A student officer known as the bank commissioner has general charge of the system. The bank has a representative in every room who acts as a depositing agent for the members of the room and who, with an assistant, endeavors to secure more depositors and greater sums. Classes in salesmanship also help in selling thrift to the pupils.

A special ticket department has also been worked into the plan of correlation. The ticket manager has a desk in the Activity Office, and here the different student officers place their orders for tickets, conduct the distribution and sale, and receive the returns. In this connection students from the department are made available as cashiers to take charge of door and gate receipts. Student managers deal directly with the ticket department and the bank.

With the extension and success of the experiment it soon became apparent that a large central office was necessary to the successful administration and supervision of so much business. A large room was equipped with a number of flat-top office desks and with a cage fitted with a number of windows which provided for the efficient working of the two banks, cafeteria, ticket office, publications office, and for the current activities that have large business demands at certain times. Managers, chairmen, and all student officers who hold positions involving business transactions are

assigned to desks in the Activity Office. Students who wish to secure tickets or subscriptions or to arrange any business matters with the various student officers report to the desk of the officer in question. The Activity Office is under the supervision of a faculty member of the business department who acts in the capacity of general office manager. There is also a student assistant office manager who often carries the full responsibility during business hours. The office maintains certain hours of business when all assigned desks may be occupied for business transactions.

The public stenographer is a particularly important member of the Activity Office. A special small room opening into the general office is maintained for the public stenographer. This room is equipped with a typewriting desk, typewriter, filing equipment, office desk, and chairs for the patrons. Students preparing for stenographic positions take turns as public stenographer. Much use is made of these stenographers by the members of the faculty. Students may also use the public stenographers under certain conditions. One cent is charged the patron for each letter.

Business students are also assigned to the general school office, department offices, athletics office, publications and store offices as stenographers and typists. Here they receive valuable training in taking dictation and in transcription. Assignments to some offices and work also require special tabulating, filing, and general office practice. Students learn to operate the multigraph, to cut acceptable stencils, and to perform several kinds of manifolding, using throughout material that is practical and vital.

The business of the cafeteria has also been placed under the supervision of the business department. A member of the faculty acts as supervisor. All of the business of the cafeteria except the purchasing is done by the students of the business curriculum. This involves ticket sales, accounting, bookkeeping, filing, correspondence, and banking, the whole offering a varied program of business training and practical experience.

In connection with the school store a book depository is maintained. Students act as clerks, receiving and giving out books. They keep the records of new books, books on hand, books discarded, and books given out and returned. Teachers receive books on

order, and individual students may present orders for books when orders are properly signed by teachers. The book room offers extended opportunity in stock-keeping and accounting.

When it is possible to secure the co-operation of city offices, students are assigned to these offices for certain hours and periods. Reports of the work done enter into the student's record, and the time is applied to the office training requirement. Such work is of much value to the students. However, it is not easy to administer and has never met with sufficient success to warrant development in place of the correlation with the business activities of the school itself.

The benefits that have come to the various student organizations as a result of the plan of correlation would admit of much elaboration. Activities that formerly struggled along from year to year with debts and lack of funds have become exceedingly prosperous. Every organization that uses funds has an acceptable balance to its credit in the school bank. Some of these balances run into four figures, and special sinking funds with the money placed at interest have been created for some organizations.

Concerts, plays, athletic contests, dues, subscriptions, and all other affairs involving business relations are managed according to business methods, and all returns are accurately accounted for; valuable training is thus secured by the participators in these activities, and real business experience is gained by the students who are definitely preparing for a business career.

The application of business methods under the supervision of the business department has been extended as far as possible to the students of the other curricula. Many of the student leaders of the extra-curricular activities are not members of the business curriculum, but all are under the direction of the business department as far as the business relations of the respective organizations are concerned. This extension of practical information and organized experience to a much greater number of students is not the least important of the advantages of the plan.

The most obvious results are secured in the direct correlation of the various phases of commercial education with the actual business material. Bookkeeping students work on real accounts;



students of filing handle vital material instead of a mechanical set. Stenographers write letters that are to be mailed. Principles of economics may be applied to situations in which the students are really interested. Salesmanship classes receive practical experience in sales work. Much opportunity is given for developing the qualities and learning the customs that are necessary in managerial, executive, and general office practice. It is not possible within the limits of this paper to develop the unlimited possibilities of such correlation.

The work of the business department in the development of the plan has grown to large proportions, but it is believed that the work of the department has been vitalized to a corresponding degree. There is every reason to believe that there will be a continual development and application of this kind of correlated activity.

The successful administration and conduct of such correlation depend to a large extent on three main factors. First, there is the definite requirement of a certain number of applied office hours as a requisite for graduation from the business curriculum. Second, it is advisable to have the general business students receive assignments in rotation through all of the correlated activities in accordance with a well devised scheme. Students who are taking specialized courses may be exempted from certain activities and given more time in others. The plan of assignment should be very flexible and admit of much adjustment to individual differences.

The third, and perhaps the most important, of the three main factors is the centralization of all of the general business and financial relations of the school in the Activity Office and school bank. Such centralization is very necessary to the successful working of the plan. This centralization of the business affairs of the school is possible only through a corresponding centralization of the government and supervision of the extra-curricular life. In our local plan this kind of centralization was secured through the board of control and student council of the student general association. A fine spirit of co-operation on the part of faculty and pupils is necessary for the development and successful operation of such a scheme of correlated activity. The local school has been particularly fortunate in this respect.